

INTRODUCTION

The world geopolitical environment will continue to directly affect US military strategy. In support of our US military strategy, the Army projects forces (the military instrument of power projection) to deter aggression worldwide. Should deterrence fail, Army forces are prepared to defeat the enemy across the full range of operations. In the future, force projection operations will be the norm as forward deployed divisions are returned to the continental US.

The Army classifies its activities as war and operations other than war (those activities that occur during peace and or conflict). US Army operations are varied and range from aid and assistance to foreign government to full combat operations against a well-armed hostile force. Army brigades must continue to deter aggression worldwide and should deterrence fail, be prepared to defeat any enemy across a wide range of threats. This challenge ranges from conflict with an emergent superpower or a hostile regional power; or against a less sophisticated, but no less determined, insurgent force. This range of threats and missions indicates future US operations will be decidedly joint in nature.

US Army brigade operations are based on the Army tenets of initiative, agility, depth, synchronization, and versatility.

Initiative sets or changes the terms of battle by action. It is the effort to force the enemy to conform to our operational tempo and purpose, while retaining our freedom of action. This requires commanders to understand the intent of their commanders two levels above-centralized planning but decentralized execution.

Agility is the ability to act faster than the enemy—a prerequisite for seizing and holding the initiative. Quickness permits the rapid concentration of combat power against the enemy's vulnerabilities. It requires the commander to constantly read the battlefield, anticipate, make quick decisions, and act without hesitation. This may require committing forces quickly without complete information when situations are time-sensitive. Agility requires both mental and physical flexibility—seeing and reacting rapidly to changing situations.

Depth is the extension of operations in time, space, resources, and purpose. The commander uses these factors in thinking in depth to forecast, anticipate likely events, and expand his freedom of action. He then applies them to arrange all available resources to attack the enemy simultaneously and sequentially throughout the depth of the battlefield.

Synchronization is the focus of resources and activities in time and space to mass at the decisive point. Although the activities such as intelligence, logistics, and fires and maneuver may occur at different times and places, they are synchronized when their combined consequences are felt at the decisive time and place. The project of effective synchronization is the maximum use of every resource where it will make the greatest contribution to success.

Versatility is the ability to shift focus, to tailor forces, and to move from one mission to another rapidly and efficiently. It implies a capacity to be multifunctional, to operate across regions throughout the full range of military operations.

Brigades create combat power within the commander's battle space by combining maneuver, firepower, protection, and leadership. Brigade commanders seek to apply overwhelming combat power to bring all these elements quickly and violently to bear; giving the enemy no opportunity to respond with an effective opposition.

Our military doctrine presents fundamental principles that guide the employment of US Army brigades. Doctrine is authoritative, but not directive; descriptive, not prescriptive. It provides the distilled insights and wisdom gained from the Army's collective experience with warfare. However, doctrine cannot replace clear thinking or alter a commander's obligation to determine the proper course of action under the circumstances prevailing at the time of decision.